

HERITAGE PRESERVATION/COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Town of Eastham Goals and Performance Standards

The Cape Cod Commission, through its Regional Policy Plan for Barnstable County, has established overall planning goals and minimum performance standards for heritage preservation/community character. Eastham's goals and performance standards are consistent with this Plan.

Goals and Policies

- 6.1 Goal:** To protect and preserve the important historic and cultural features of the Eastham landscape and environment that are the critical components of its heritage and economy.

Minimum Performance Standards

- 6.1.1 An historic structure's key character-defining features are to be preserved. Additional alterations to historic structures should be consistent with the building's architectural style and not diminish its historic and architectural significance. Removal or alterations of character-defining historic features should be avoided unless the Historical Commission determines that such removal or alteration will not have a significant negative impact on the integrity of the historic property, surrounding historic district, or otherwise distinctive neighborhood.
- 6.1.2 The distinguishing original features of an historic or cultural landscape shall be preserved. New development adjacent to or within historic or cultural landscapes shall be located to retain the distinctive qualities of such landscapes and designed to maintain the general scale and character-defining features of such landscapes.
- 6.1.3 Where development is proposed on or adjacent to known archaeology sites or sites with high archaeological sensitivity as identified by the Massachusetts Historical Commission or the Eastham Historical Commission during the review process, it shall be configured to maintain and/or enhance such resources where possible. A pre-development investigation of such sites shall be required early in the site planning process to serve as a guide for layout of the development. Archaeological sites determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places shall be preserved and protected from disturbance.
- 6.1.4 Historic buildings that may be slated for demolition or relocation should be preserved on site and reused or incorporated into the overall design of the project.

- 6.1.5 Cultural landscapes and archaeologically sensitive areas should be protected through conservation restrictions or preservation restrictions that ensure their long-term preservation.

6.2 Goal: To encourage redevelopment of existing structures as an alternative to new construction, and to ensure that development and redevelopment respects the traditions and distinctive character of Eastham consistent with Designing the Future to Honor the Past, Design Guidelines for Cape Cod, Technical Bulletin 96-001.

Minimum Performance Standards

- 6.2.1 Expansion or creation of strip development shall not be permitted.
- 6.2.2 New development proposed on town roads and Route 6 shall be sized such that it can be accommodated without significant changes to the existing character of the road. Any necessary structural improvements shall be consistent with the existing character of the road, unless the Commission and the Town deem alternatives to be appropriate.
- 6.2.3 New development proposed adjacent to scenic roads shall be designed to preserve distinctive features of the scenic road including tree canopy, stone walls, winding roads character, and scenic views.
- 6.2.4 New development adjacent to or within historic districts, village centers, cultural landscapes, historic properties or otherwise distinctive neighborhoods shall be designed to be consistent with the character of the area and to retain the distinctive features of the neighborhood. Elements of the distinctive area's character such as building mass and scale and roof shape, roof pitch, and proportions between doors and windows shall be maintained. Distinctive features of the area such as proximity to the street, views to water and/or landscapes, and significant open spaces shall be preserved.
- 6.2.5 For all new development in industrial or commercial areas, no individual structure shall exceed a footprint of 15,000 square feet unless it is fully screened or located within a Growth Incentive Zone. For redevelopment projects, expansion of existing buildings with individual footprint up to 50,000 square feet shall be permitted without full screening if the expansion occurs on previously developed impervious or landscaped areas. Full screening may be achieved through the use of traditionally scaled frontage buildings or a vegetated buffer at least 200 feet in depth. The method of screening shall be consistent with the character of the surrounding area and preserve the distinction between village centers and outlying areas. In all cases, where an individual structure exceeds a building footprint of 10,000 square feet, the massing facade, and roof configuration shall be varied in order to reduce the apparent mass of the building and shall include a minimum of 10 feet of set-back or projection in the facade footprint for every 50 feet of facade length.

- 6.2.6 In industrial parks or areas not visible from scenic or regional roadways or other distinctive areas noted above in 7.2.4, use of nontraditional material and forms may be appropriate. In such areas, maintenance of adequate buffers on subject property is required to ensure that the proposed development will not be visible from scenic or regional roadways such as Route 6A.
- 6.2.7 Redevelopment of existing strip development shall provide adequate buffers between parking areas and the street, and significant improvement to interior parking lot landscaping, as well as facade improvement and frontage building, as necessary, to improve the visual character of the site.
- 6.2.8 All development shall implement a landscape plan which addresses the functional aspect of landscaping, such as drainage, erosion prevention, wildlife enhancement, screening, and buffering, wind barriers, provision for shade, energy conservation, sound absorption, dust abatement and reduction of glare. When vegetative buffers are necessary to prevent impacts from new development on scenic resources, maintenance of existing vegetation shall be required in the buffer area. A maintenance agreement or irrigation, as appropriate, shall be provided.
- 6.2.9 Exterior lighting in new development or redevelopment shall comply with standards including design, light sources, total light cutoff and foot-candle levels defined in the Exterior Design Standards, Technical Bulletin 95-001.
- 6.2.10 The installation of billboards, offsite advertising (excepting approved directional signs) and internally lit or flashing signs shall not be permitted.
- 6.2.11 All utilities for development including cable shall be placed underground except where the presence of natural features such as wetlands or archaeological resources prevent such placement.

Other Development Review Policies

- 6.2.12 The integrity of natural landforms and broad, open views of the landscape as seen from any local, county or state-designated scenic roads and Route 6 should be maintained.
- 6.2.13 The planting of shade trees along roadways to improve the visual quality of the area is encouraged. Such trees should be tolerant of roadside conditions and a minimum of 3-inch caliper/diameter at breast height (4 feet above ground surface) at time of planting.
- 6.2.14 Distinguishing original features of a site such as trees of greater than 6" diameter at breast height, existing planting and topography should be preserved where possible. Plantings on the street-facing side of buildings, window boxes and planters are encouraged. Benches or other seating arrangements and walkways within the development and linking to other buildings should be provided where appropriate.

- 6.2.15 Traditional building materials such as wood shingles, clapboards and brick should be used for new construction and rehabilitation of existing structures.
- 6.2.16 In general, the size and color of all signs should be in scale and compatible with the surrounding buildings and street. When more than one sign is used, the graphics should be coordinated to present a unified image. Wooden signs, either painted or carved are usually most appropriate.
- 6.2.17 All exterior lighting should be part of the architectural and landscape design concept. Fixtures, standards and exposed accessories should be concealed or harmonious with other project design materials. Lights from fixtures should be pointed downward and contained on the property.
- 6.2.18 Underground placement of utility lines as part of any roadway improvement project is encouraged.

Existing Conditions

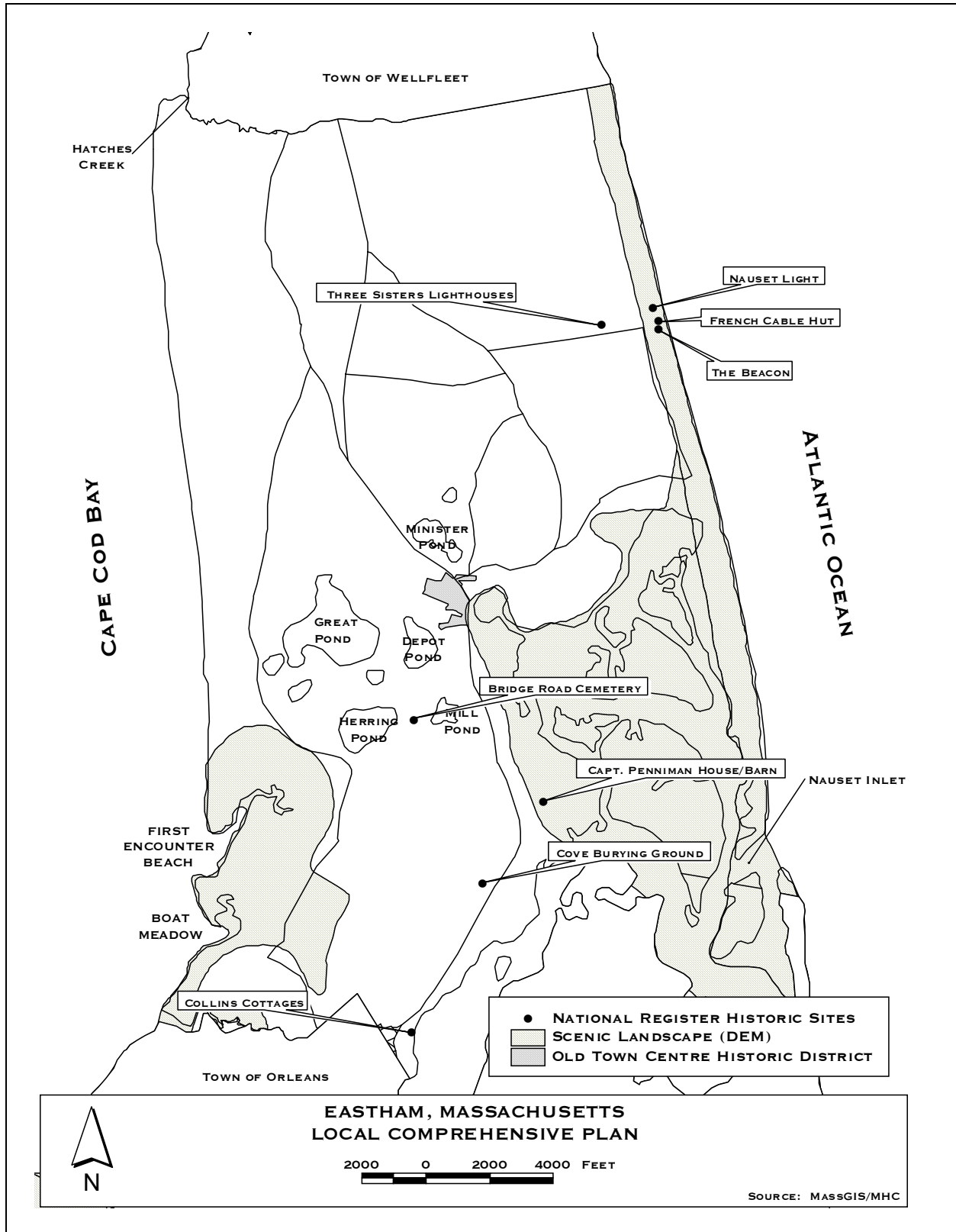
The character of Eastham is made up of significant historic sites, landscapes and buildings. Eastham's Atlantic coastline is preserved by the presence of the Cape Cod National Seashore. The bayside has pleasant summer homes, various Town landings and beaches, and Rock Harbor Marina in the south. The town's settlement pattern has traditionally been dispersed and focused primarily on agricultural and maritime pursuits. More populous areas were historically located to the north and south of Eastham's current borders. With the end of World War II and the rise of tourism in the region, Eastham's population has remained dispersed. Eastham has never developed a Town Center or village-style focal point. Route 6, which bisects the Town east/west, has become the single greatest threat to the semi-rural character, which exists, and is the foremost concern of those residing in the Town.

Historic Sites and Districts

Several sites and structures in Eastham are listed in the National Register of Historic Places including those within the boundaries of the Cape Cod National Seashore. These are: Nauset Archaeological District, which has been designated a National Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior. This designation automatically confers National Register status on these six sites which include three in the Salt Pond area, two at Fort Hill and one at Coast Guard Beach; Nauset Light; Nauset Light Keeper's House; and oil house; Beacon and Twin Sisters of Nauset Lighthouses; French Cable Hut.

The Old Town Centre Historic District is a local regulatory district approved by Town Meeting in 1986. The District Commission reviews all exterior buildings alterations, demolitions and new construction. The District consists of 25 properties and encompasses the west side of Route 6 in the vicinity of Salt Pond Road, Locust Road to Mill Road, and the east side of Route 6 along Nauset Road to Schoolhouse Road. It includes the 1869 Schoolhouse Museum owned by the Eastham Historical Society.

Map 18: Historic Preservation Map



Since approval of the Town's first local comprehensive plan several Eastham historic sites and districts have been added to the National Register of Historic Places as a result of grants obtained by the Eastham Historical Commission. The Old Town Centre Historic District is now listed in the National Register as well as its previous listing in the State Register.

The Eastham Center Historic District consists of 59 properties along the west side of Route 6, Samoset Road to Bridge Road, Depot Road to Samoset Road. Notable inclusions are the Windmill, Windmill-Green, Public Library, Chapel-in-the-Pines (Unitarian-Universalist), 1741 Swift-Daley House, owned by the Eastham Historical Society, and the Eastham Town Hall, the only property on the east side of Route 6.

Collins Cottages Historic District, 13 properties, is sited on town Cove at the entrance to Eastham. Cove Burying Ground, Eastham's first cemetery, is on the East Side of Route 6 near Pine Woods Road. Bridge Road Cemetery, second oldest, is west of Route 6 and south of Samoset Road. Both cemeteries are listed individually in the National Register.

The Fort Hill Rural Historic District encompasses 100 acres of field, forest, and salt marsh within the boundaries of the Cape Cod National Seashore. Located east of Route 6 the district includes the Captain Edward Penniman House and Barn, Sylvanus Knowles House, and Seth Knowles House.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission, in conformance with Federal guidelines, considers any structure at least 50 years old to have potential historic significance. Research conducted by the Eastham Historic Society and the Eastham Historic Commission has identified 221 structures in the Town meeting this definition.

A formal inventory of 100 properties was completed in 1995 and is on file at the Massachusetts Historical Commission. 28 properties were recommended for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The Massachusetts Historical Commission determined 16 to be eligible for listing. Six have since been listed.

The oldest church building in Eastham is the Chapel-in-the-Pines (Unitarian-Universalist) dating from 1889. It is individually eligible for listing in the National Register and is now listed there as a contributing building in the Eastham Center National Register District. A major financial sponsor of the Chapel's construction was Captain Edward Penniman whose house and barn at Fort Hill is a National Register property.

Scenic Landscapes

The *Massachusetts Landscape Inventory*, established by the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to "identify and locate the Commonwealth's important natural features" including the salt marshes of Eastham in the Cape Cod Natural Seashore Unit. These marshes, primarily the Nauset marsh, are visible from the Fort Hill area, Seashore trails, and the old Coast Guard Station area at Coast Guard Beach.

There are several distinctive scenic areas, which can be viewed from Town-owned lands. These include the Lamont Smith and Louise Horton areas, the Fort Hill area looking out to Town Cove, Coast Guard Beach and Nauset Beach in Orleans, as well as to the salt marshes, the Cape Cod Rail Trail with views of several marsh and pond areas; Town Cove at Collins Landing as seen from Route 6; Boat Meadow landscape as seen traveling north on Bridge Road, all of the Town landings and beaches, and the Atlantic Ocean and Coast Guard Beach as seen traveling south on Ocean View Drive from Cable Road.

Culturally Significant Landscapes and Scenic Roads

Eastham's cemeteries are significant contributors to the historical character of its cultural landscape. The Cove Burying Ground (1660 - 1770), also the site of the Town's first church, contains the graves of three Mayflower passengers and many of the first settlers. The Bridge Road Cemetery (1754 - 1886), also the site of the Town's second church buried succeeding generations of the original residents. Both cemeteries are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Congregational and Soldiers Cemetery was established in 1829 when a new church was built on the King's Highway (now Route 6). The complete name derives from a Civil War Memorial erected on the grounds. A Methodist burial grounds and church were established in the early 1800's on the King's Highway and is now the Evergreen Cemetery.

The most popular culturally significant landscape in Eastham is the "Windmill Green" located on Route 6 and Samoset Road. The wind-driven gristmill is the oldest on Cape Cod and a favorite tourist attraction. It has been at its present site since 1808 and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing structure to the Eastham Center Historic District.

Eastham is fortunate to have many scenic roads featuring combinations of tree-lined vistas, historic houses, ocean, pond and marsh views. The Eastham Historic Commission has compiled a list of scenic roads that include: Bridge, Cable, Dyer Prince, Fort Hill, Governor Prence (east of Route 6), Great Pond, Hemenway, Herring Brook, Lawton, Locust, Massasoit, Nauset and Salt Pond Roads, Ocean View Drive, and Smith Lane.

Areas in Need of Improvement

Most of the areas identified as in need of improvement because of unattractive signage, inadequate landscaping and screening, and in need of pedestrian amenities are located on Route 6 from Old Orchard Road north to the Wellfleet Town line. Some areas are also located south of Nauset Road in the Town Hall area. National Seashore properties suffer from lack of funding for cultural resources and will continue to be in need of some renovation. While general conditions of the private structure inventory is considered to be satisfactory, there are some properties in need of general maintenance and repair.

A major and growing threat to the visual appeal of Eastham's scenic roads and traditional community character comes from the proliferation of overhead utility lines. Reflecting a combination of new construction, the advent of cable television service during the mid-1980s, and greatly increased demand for both electricity and telephone service, recent years have seen

the addition of many new utility poles along town roads and replacement of short poles with taller ones that are out of scale with both the local architecture and the landscape. Cable, transformers and other related equipment are also on the increase, creating visual pollution and intruding on the vistas of marshes, shorelines, ponds and historic buildings. An increasing number of mature trees are being mutilated to accommodate the new wires and cables.

Analysis

Existing Protections for Historic, Scenic and Cultural Resources

Properties within the Old Town Historic District are protected from inappropriate alteration and demolition. The Historic District Commission reviews new construction, reconstruction, alterations, movement and demolitions of all exterior architectural features of buildings and structures within the district visible from a public street, way or park.

Historic properties within the National Seashore are provided some protection through the use limitations of the Seashore District and through Park Service review of alterations to improved properties. Historic Properties listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places and outside municipal historic districts are provided protection through the Cape Cod Commission Act. These properties and sites can be protected from “substantial alteration” or demolition by Local Historical Commission or other agency referral to the Cape Cod Commission for review.

Current and Projected Threats to Community Character

Route 6 has long been Eastham’s “main street.” The community character of Eastham, however, has been threatened by commercial sprawl in the form of strip development along this route. Signage, building design, overhead utilities, and landscaping (or lack thereof) have contributed to a sense of suburban sprawl along this major thoroughfare. This “sprawl” detracts from the inherent nature of Eastham. Several measures were undertaken in the late 1980s, which have helped curb the further deterioration of this route through re-zoning and use limitations. However, traffic associated with the Seashore as well as with those traveling to and from Provincetown continues to pose a threat to the small-town character of Eastham. The formation of a plan addressing improvements to existing businesses, signage, landscaping, parking requirements, pedestrian flow and traffic safety along this vital route is necessary to mitigate current and projected community character concerns. See Transportation section.

The growing development of communications towers is also of concern as companies compete to expand service to Cape Cod. Regulations governing the location of cellular towers and other transmission facilities are necessary to limit impacts to environmental resources, important vistas and other areas with distinctive community character. Eastham has adopted a by-law limiting the location of cellular towers to town owned land.

In recent years serious concern has been expressed by Eastham residents over the construction of large-scale single-family homes and their impact on community character. Additionally, current owners of cottages on small lots close to Cape Cod Bay are applying for permits to make

substantial square footage upgrades that will impact community character. Responding to concerns from residents and other Town regulatory boards the Planning Board prepared a new zoning article for residential site plan review, which was approved by a special town meeting in 2001.

Current and Projected Threats to Historic Resources

Outside of the Town's Historic Districts, there is little protection afforded historic properties in Eastham. Current and projected threats to the historic inventory include property owner disinterest or financial inability to maintain a historic property, remodeling projects that destroy historic features, properties which fall into disrepair due to extended litigation, and new development in close proximity to a historic property and not in architectural congruence with it.

Strategies to Protect Identified Resources

Historic Districts are considered to afford the highest level of protection for historic properties. While the expansion of a current district is a future possibility, the creation of any new district is unlikely. Emphasis should be placed on the nomination of individual properties to the National Register of Historic Places in order to provide greater recognition of their significance and protection from substantial alteration or demolition under town by-law and the Cape Cod Commission Act.

A demolition delay by-law is in place that provides a procedure to forestall the immediate demolition of any structure of potential historic significance until a public hearing can be held to make a final determination, and, if appropriate, initiate action to preserve the structure. The by-law has been invoked successfully in its only two applications since its approval in 1996.

Signage, building design, landscaping, lighting, pedestrian circulation and parking requirements, accompanied by selective "undergrounding" of overhead utilities, are needed to facilitate protection of the Town's inherent character. Boards and Committees are addressing these issues along the Route 6 corridor and in other areas of Eastham. Site plan review and design review by-laws have been adopted to provide an opportunity for review of project impacts on historic resources and community character. Few applications under the new residential site plan review by-law have been reviewed by the Planning Board but there is agreement that the by-law will be effective in addressing community character concerns. Refer to the Land Use section for further consideration of these issues. Cape Cod Commission model by-laws and Technical Bulletin 96-001 "Designing the Future to Honor the Past, Design Guidelines for Cape Cod" should be consulted in addressing these issues.

Under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 15C designated Scenic Roads approved by Town Meeting action are protected against tree cutting and stonewall removal during repair or resurfacing activities carried out by the Town until approval is obtained from the Planning Board after a public hearing. While the Historic Commission has identified a number of scenic roads, none has been so designated by Town Meeting action. The Town should designate scenic roads and adopt regulations for administration of the Scenic Road Act.

The celebration in 2001 of Eastham's 350th anniversary as a town resulted in a significant increase in interaction and communication among town committees, Cape Cod National Seashore staff, and local community groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, Eastham Forum, Eastham Historical Society, and Nauset Light Preservation Society. Under the leadership of the 350th Anniversary Committee a yearlong series of historically oriented programs and events gave residents a heightened sense of their heritage and community character. The Town should continue to use this cooperative network for the purpose of developing information for all parties regarding opportunities to preserve historic properties and community character. Information regarding historic preservation restrictions and existing tax incentive programs that can encourage appropriate renovation and alteration of historic properties should be compiled and made available to interested individuals.

Implementation

Recommended Town Actions

- A. Continue to inventory its historic resources and, where appropriate, structures, landscapes or sites of historic significance should be protected through means such as individual nominations for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and subdivision regulations which provide for review of potential impacts to historic and archaeological resources.
- B. Establish a scenic road by-law with guidelines that preserve the character of roads already designated by the Historical Commission.
- C. Adopt a by-law which limits land clearing and alteration of natural topography prior to development review, as discussed in the Commission's Model Land Clearing, Grading and Protection of Specimen Trees By-law, and a landscape ordinance which protects existing trees and requires landscaping and screening of new development from major roads.
- D. Where feasible, actively encourage the undergrounding of existing utility lines and structures in locations where they detract from historic and cultural features, community character and scenic views.

See "Heritage Preservation/Community Character" and "Land Use" in Implementation Section.